159. Needs of the Muslims.

MR. NAGOOR MEERA MEERANAN MEERA RAWTHER (*Member, Nominated*) said that the number of Muslim officers in the public service was still very small. Compared with other communities, the Muhommedan community held a very backward place in the Government service. In order to remove this defect and with a view to providing a stimulus to the Muslims towards educational advancement, as many qualified men as there were among them should be entertained in the public service. They should be entertained in good numbers particularly in the Land Revenue and the Judicial Departments. In the former, a few persons should be immediately appointed as Tahsildars. Those Muslims who were already in the service should be given due promotions and if possible the low-paid among them should be posted in their own native places as a means of helping them to get on with the poor salaries that they were getting.

Arrangements should be made for having at least three Muslim representatives in the Legislative Council, two being nominated by Government and the other being elected. A Muslim candidate could be returned by election only if there were separate constituencies for Muslims.

The Koran should be removed from law courts. Swearing was strictly prohibited to the Muslims and by requiring them to swear on the Koran in a court of law, Government were only coercing them to break an article of their faith.

Primary education should be made compulsory among Muslims. Without such a provision, it would take a long time for a present-day Muslim parent to appreciate the value of education and to send his or her child to school.

As a particular means of encouraging education among the Muslims, their boys should be given admission in all schools at all times of the year.

Muslim young men should be awarded scholarships and sent to foreign countries for higher education.

In order to enable Muslim pupils to study their religious books, which were mostly written in Arabic, Hindi and Tamil, these languages should be taught in all English and Vernacular schools for Muslims and for this purpose competent munshies should be appointed in these schools, who should also be given salaries commensurate with the work turned out by them.

The English Middle School at Pattanamtitta should be raised to the High School grade. The people of the locality had acquired the necessary site for the purpose and some preliminary work had already been executed for the school building. Government should take over the site and the building from the people and complete the work at their own cost.

DEWAN'S REPLY: Mr. Nagoor Meera Meeranan Meera Rowther, your suggestion that Muslims should be recruited as Tahsildars

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direct is impossible under the existing system. I have only to repeat what I have already said in regard to representation in public service.

In regard to the use of the Koran in courts, I shall order its removal if, as I have already indicated in my reply on the subject in the 23rd session, there has been no call for it for three years. The question of opening the school at Pattanamtitta will be taken up for consideration as soon as you hand over the site and building.

160. Needs of the Muslims.

MR. M. M. SHAHUL HAMEED SAHIB (*Member, Nominated*) said that the Koran should be removed from all courts of law. Islam prohibited idolatry or any symbolic representation of God. Koran when used for swearing was given a symbolic representation and so swearing by the Koran was against the tenets of Islam. Government had indeed ruled that swearing by the Koran was not compulsory, but practically in every court, as soon as a Muslim witness entered the box, a copy of the Koran was placed in his hands and he took it that it was obligatory that he should swear by it. Government should therefore issue a rule that the Koran should not be presented to a Muhommedan in a court of law unless he asked for it, or that he should invariably be informed that swearing was not obligatory and that a solemn affirmation would do instead. As a third alternative, the Koran should be removed from all courts of law.

Barawafat should be declared a public holiday. At present it was a special holiday for the Muhommedans. But cases were being posted for hearing and examinations were being held on this day, which resulted in great inconvenience to the Muslims.

Detailed rules should be issued for enforcing the principle of communal representation in regard to appointments in the public service. The rules should follow the model of the Madras Government rules and lay down the percentage of candidates to be selected from each community, the order in which they were to be taken etc.

In making nominations to the various popular institutions like the Legislative Council and the Village Panchayat Courts, Government should see that only persons possessing a prescribed minimum of education qualification were selected for the purpose. A fixed standard of literacy was absolutely necessary to enable the persons concerned to intelligently follow the proceedings of the houses of which they were members.

The Muhommedan girls' school at Edalakudi should be shifted to Mavilai in Elankadai, where the local Muslims were prepared to hand over a site to Government free of cost. It would be enough if the Department raised a building for the school and conducted it at their own cost.

DEWAN'S REPLY: Mr. Shahul Hameed Sahib, in regard to the removal of the Koran from Law Courts, I shall refer you to what I have said to the other two members. I shall have your suggestions in respect of this communicated to the High Court for their consideration.

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